

# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 7 October 1993

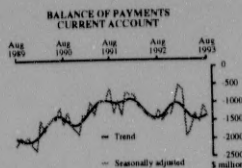
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*statistics*



## Current account trend better despite rise in seasonally adjusted deficit

The provisional trend estimate for the August current account deficit was \$1 351 million, down \$65 million (5%) on the provisional trend estimate for July. This is the third consecutive fall in this balance.

Seasonally adjusted, Australia's current account deficit for August 1993 rose \$318 million (29%) to \$1 397 million.

The increase in the deficit was caused by the following factors: a turnaround of \$281 million, from a surplus to a deficit, in the merchandise trade balance (exports fell \$198 million (4%) to \$5 187 million and imports increased \$83 million (2%) to \$5 340 million); an increase of \$118 million (109%) in the net services deficit; and a decrease of \$48 million (61%) in the net unrequited transfers surplus.

Partly offsetting these movements was a decrease of \$129 million (11%) in the net income deficit.

**BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, CURRENT ACCOUNT**  
\$ million

	July 1993		August 1993	
	Original	Seasonally adjusted	Original	Seasonally adjusted
Balance on merchandise trade	-196	128	-426	-153
Net services	-275	-108	-301	-226
Balance on goods and services	-471	20	-727	-379
Net income	-1 159	-1 178	-1 028	-1 049
Net unrequited transfers	98	79	66	31
Balance on current account	-1 532	-1 079	-1 689	-1 397

Merchandise exports in original terms fell \$225 million, or 4 per cent to \$5 162 million.

Rural exports fell \$99 million, or 7 per cent, to \$1 362 million. Decreases were recorded in: meat, down \$82 million or 21 per cent (due to decreased volumes of beef and veal exports); wool, down \$33 million or 16 per cent (due mainly to decreased volumes of greasy wool exports); and 'other' rural exports, down \$28 million or 5 per cent. These decreases were partially offset by increases recorded in sugar, up \$25 million or 18 per cent; and cereals, up \$19 million or 10 per cent.

Non-rural exports in original terms fell \$126 million, or 3 per cent, to \$3 800 million. Decreases were recorded in:

- ☐ transport equipment, down \$105 million or 38 per cent;
- ☐ coal, coke and briquettes, down \$42 million or 6 per cent;
- ☐ 'other' non-rural exports, down \$35 million or 18 per cent;
- ☐ gold, down \$18 million or 4 per cent; and
- ☐ machinery, down \$12 million or 3 per cent.

Increases were recorded in the four remaining commodity groupings, the largest being metal ores and minerals, up \$61 million or 10 per cent; and 'other' metals, up \$21 million or 5 per cent.

Merchandise imports in original terms rose \$5 million to \$5 588 million. The largest increases were recorded in:

- fuels, up \$183 million or 81 per cent;
- 'other' imports, up \$16 million or 6 per cent;
- 'other' transport equipment, up \$12 million or 13 per cent; and
- metals and metal manufactures, up \$7 million or 2 per cent.

The largest decreases occurred in chemicals, down \$82 million or 13 per cent; machinery, down \$44 million or 3 per cent; road vehicles, down \$42 million or 7 per cent; and textiles, down \$25 million or 11 per cent.

For further information, order the publication *Balance of Payments, Australia* (5301.0), or contact Graeme Groves on (06) 252 5540 or Peter Morrow on (06) 252 6689.

## Job vacancies rising

The estimates of job vacancies and overtime are now presented for the first time as trend estimates. Seasonally adjusted series are no longer published but are available on request.

In the three months to August 1993, the trend estimate of the number of job vacancies rose by 9.3 per cent to 35 600. Since August 1991 when job vacancies troughed at 25 100, there has been a slow increase in the trend series. Prior to August 1991, job vacancies had fallen sharply from a peak of 71 000 in February 1989.

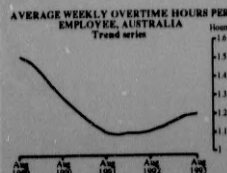
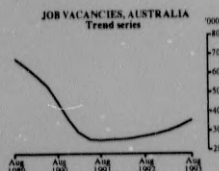
In trend terms, both the public and private sectors recorded increases in the three months to August 1993 (see table). In the twelve months to August 1993 job vacancies have increased in the private sector by 39.3 per cent and in the public sector by 0.7 per cent.

**JOB VACANCIES**

	At 21 May 1993	At 20 August 1993	Percentage change
Trend			
Private sector	25 400	27 000	6.5
Public sector	7 300	8 000	9.9
All sectors	32 500	35 600	9.3

The trend series estimate of average weekly overtime hours per employee in August 1993 was 1.20, up 1.5 per cent from May 1993 and 8.3 per cent higher than twelve months ago. The trend estimate for the proportion of employees working overtime was estimated at 16.59 per cent, up 1.7 per cent from May 1993 and up 4.5 per cent from August 1992.

For further information, order the publication *Job Vacancies and Overtime, Australia* (6354.0), or contact Peter Greenfield on (09) 323 5201.



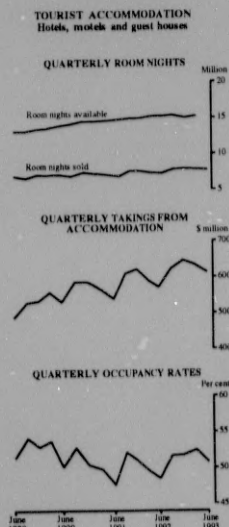
## Higher demand boosts takings for tourism establishments

Average room occupancy for hotels, motels and guest houses in Australia increased to 50.8 per cent in the June quarter 1993 compared with 48.5 per cent in the June quarter 1992. A 6.3 per cent increase in demand (to 7.7 million room nights occupied) exceeded the increase of 1.4 per cent in rooms available over the period.

Takings from accommodation increased by 7.2 per cent to \$612 million, while average takings per room night was unchanged at \$79.

Large room occupancy rate increases were recorded for Queensland (up 5.2 percentage points), Northern Territory (5.1 percentage points) and Western Australia (4.1 percentage points). Tasmania, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia had smaller increases, while in the Australian Capital Territory the occupancy rate decreased by 4.3 percentage points.

Nationally, guest arrivals at hotels, motels and guest houses increased by 5.4 per cent, with only the Australian Capital Territory recording a decrease. Average length of stay was unchanged at 2.0 days.



**TOURIST ACCOMMODATION, AUSTRALIA**  
Hotels, motels and guest houses with facilities

	June quarter		Percentage change
	1992	1993	
Rooms available ('000)	164.7	167.0	1.4
Room nights occupied ('000)	7 246.7	7 706.6	6.3
Room occupancy rate (%)	48.5	50.8	n.a.
Guest arrivals ('000)	6 298.8	6 636.3	5.4
Average length of stay (days)	2.0	2.0	n.a.
Takings from accommodation (\$m)	570.9	611.9	7.2

The number of holiday flats, units and houses available Australia wide for short-term letting increased by 1.9 per cent, and unit nights occupied increased by 7.5 per cent. The unit occupancy rate rose from 42.0 to 44.3 per cent. Accommodation takings increased by 7.6 per cent to \$75 million.

For caravan parks, takings from accommodation increased by 7.5 per cent to \$97 million.

Visitor hostels (backpacker establishments) recorded a bed occupancy rate of 39.3 per cent in the June quarter 1993, compared with 42.2 per cent in the June quarter 1992. Takings from accommodation were \$10.5 million at an average \$12 per guest night.

For further information, order the publication *Tourist Accommodation, Australia* (8635.0), or contact Sinfi Ryder on (07) 222 6215.

## Tentative resumption of growth in home building approvals

The provisional trend for the total number of dwelling units approved continued to show signs of very weak growth to August 1993 following a short period of decline between February and May 1993. The trend rose by 0.4 per cent in August to 14 611 approvals, following growth of 0.2 per cent in July and no change between May and June 1993. The weakness of the growth is such that a fall of 1 per cent or more (about one quarter of the historical average monthly movement) in the seasonally adjusted number of dwelling units approved in September, would see the trend begin to decline. A fall of more than 2 per cent in the September number, will see the trend estimates revised to show a weak decline over the whole period since January 1993.

The provisional trend for the number of private sector house approvals continued to show the slow growth evident since January 1993, rising by 0.6 per cent in August 1993 to 10 316. The trend in private sector house approvals is now at its highest point since April 1989.

DWELLING UNITS APPROVED, AUGUST 1993

	Number	Percentage change	
		From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Private sector houses			
Trend estimate	10 316	0.6	3.8
Seasonally adjusted	10 474	1.3	4.9
Original	10 764	-1.9	9.2
Total dwelling units			
Trend estimate	14 611	0.4	7.3
Seasonally adjusted	14 556	-4.2	7.7
Original	15 231	-3.2	12.6

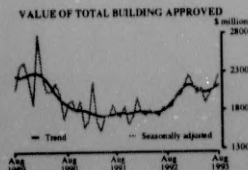
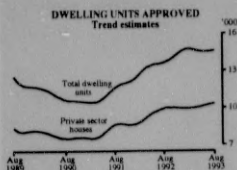
### Value of building approved

As a result of three consecutive monthly increases in the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional trend estimates for the value of total building approved which had been falling, are now showing growth from May 1993. The trend rose by 2.2 per cent in August, following growth of 1.5 per cent and 0.8 per cent over the previous two months.

The provisional trend series for the value of new residential building approved, which had been falling since January 1993, has levelled out and is now showing signs of growth. The August trend estimate rose by 2.0 per cent.

As a result of a 46 per cent increase in the seasonally adjusted value of non-residential building approved in August 1993, the recent trend estimates have been substantially revised and now show growth over the four months to August 1993.

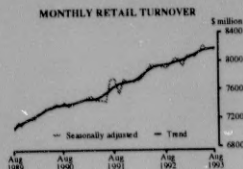
For further information, order the publication *Building Approvals, Australia* (8731.0), or contact Paul Seville on (06) 252 6067.



## Retail growth at snail's pace

The weakening of the growth rate in the trend estimate of total retail turnover evident in the estimates for July 1993 has continued into August. The trend estimates had increased by 0.3 or 0.4 per cent per month in early 1993, but rose by only 0.1 per cent in both July and August 1993. The annual growth (August 1993 over August 1992) was 2.9 per cent, a monthly average growth of just over 0.2 per cent.

The weak growth in the total trend estimates reflects the current weak growth in the trend estimate for the grocery industry (the largest industry). Hotels, liquor stores and licensed clubs are showing relatively strong growth so far this year. Other food stores and clothing and fabric stores are both showing weak growth following a period of decline. Department stores are in decline.



RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER

	Original value in August 1993 (\$m)	Average monthly percentage change in trend estimates	
		3 months ended August 1993	12 months ended August 1993
Grocers etc.	2 367	0.2	0.4
Butcher	192	-1.2	0.2
Other food stores	511	0.2	-0.4
Total food group	3 070	0.1	0.2
Hotels, liquor stores, licensed clubs	963	0.8	0.6
Department/general stores	721	-1.0	0.0
Clothing/fabrics stores	491	0.1	-0.2
Electrical stores	447	0.9	0.7
Pharmacies	388	1.0	1.4
Newsagents	241	-1.9	-0.7
Other industries	1 341	n.a.	n.a.
All industries	7 660	0.1	0.2

On a State basis, trend estimates of turnover for New South Wales have decreased by around 0.3 per cent over each of the last four months. Western Australia is the only State showing strong growth. Victoria and South Australia are showing moderate but easing growth rates in recent trend estimates.

RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER  
Monthly percentage change in State trend estimates

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	ACT	Aust.
1993								
April	-0.1	0.8	0.0	0.6	1.4	-0.3	0.5	0.4
May	-0.3	0.7	-0.1	0.6	1.4	-0.3	0.2	0.3
June	-0.4	0.5	-0.1	0.6	1.2	-0.3	-0.1	0.2
July	-0.4	0.3	-0.1	0.5	1.0	-0.3	-0.2	0.1
August	-0.3	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.8	0.0	-0.3	0.1

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### Editor

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**Statistics Weekly**  
**7 October 1993**

## Order from the following:

### Expected releases over the fortnight to 19 October

- 7** The Labour Force, Australia, September 1993 (6202.0; \$10.70)
- 15** Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, August 1993 (6407.0; \$10.70)  
Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, August 1993 (6408.0; \$8.20)  
Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, August 1993 (6412.0; \$10.70)
- 18** Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, August 1993 (5609.0; \$10.70)

### Selected releases: 29 September to 5 October

#### General

Australian Economic Indicators, October 1993 (1350.0; \$26.00)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, NSW, September 1993 (1305.1; \$14.30)  
Economic Indicators, NSW, September 1993 (1307.1; \$5.60)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, Vic., September 1993 (1303.2; \$10.70)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, Qld, October 1993 (1304.3; \$9.70)  
Australian Capital Territory Business Indicators, September 1993 (1303.8; \$7.50)  
Australian Capital Territory at a Glance, 1993 (1314.8; \$1.00)

#### Demography

Australian Demographic Statistics, March Qtr 1993 (3101.0; \$12.20)  
Estimated Resident Population in Statistical Local Areas, ACT, June 1992 (3205.8; \$6.10)

#### National accounts, Finance and Foreign trade

Cash Management Trusts, Aust., August 1993 (5635.0; \$6.10)  
Public Unit Trusts, Aust., June Qtr 1993 (5645.0; \$12.20) — *final issue*

#### Labour statistics and Prices

The Labour Force, Qld, August Qtr 1993 (6201.3; \$16.30)

#### Agriculture

Livestock Products, Aust., August 1993 (7215.0; \$8.00)  
Viticulture, Aust., 1992-93, Preliminary (7311.0; \$10.00)

#### Manufacturing, Mining, Energy, Service Industries, Building and Construction

Information Technology Activity Survey, WA, 1992 (8124.0; \$10.00) — *new issue*  
Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Food, Drink, Tobacco, Stock and Poultry Food, July 1993 (8359.0; \$10.70)  
Actual and Expected Private Mineral Exploration, Aust., June Qtr 1993 (8412.0; \$10.20)  
Tourist Accommodation, Aust., June Qtr 1993 (8635.0; \$20.00)  
Building Approvals, Vic., August 1993 (8731.2; \$10.70)  
Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Vic., July 1993 (8741.2; \$10.70)  
Building Approvals, Qld, August 1993 (8731.3; \$10.70)  
Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Qld, July 1993 (8741.3; \$10.70)  
Building Activity, Qld, June Qtr 1993 (8752.3; \$10.70)  
Manufacturing Industry, WA, 1989-90 (8221.5; \$16.30) — *new issue*  
Building Approvals, SA, August 1993 (8731.4; \$10.70)  
Building Activity, SA, June Qtr 1993 (8752.4; \$10.70)  
Building Approvals, NT, August 1993 (8731.7; \$7.10)  
Building Activity, NT, 7 June Qtr 1993 (8752.7; \$10.70)

#### Transport

Motor Vehicle Registrations, Vic., August 1993 (9303.2; \$10.70)



Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
<b>National accounts</b>						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 93	\$m	n.a.	95 250	1.2	3.3
<b>International accounts</b>						
Balance on current account (b)	August 93	\$m	-1 689	-1 397	-29	-18
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	-426	-153	—	—
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	-727	-379	—	—
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 162	5 187	-4	10
Merchandise imports	"	"	-5 588	-5 340	2	17
Net foreign debt	30 June 93	\$m	172 325	n.a.	7.5	12.9
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	222 984	n.a.	7.2	12.2
<b>Consumption and investment</b>						
Retail turnover at current prices	August 93	\$m	7 660	8 155	-0.2	3.2
New capital expenditure at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 93	\$m	6 034	5 788	-2.8	1.8
New motor vehicle registrations	August 93	no.	52 422	51 724	15.4	17.6
<b>Production</b>						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 93	\$m	34 296	34 540	0.9	1.2
Dwelling unit approvals	August 93	no.	15 231	14 556	-4.2	7.7
Building approvals	"	\$m	2 277	2 248	7.2	23.8
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	Mar. qtr 93	\$m	5 748	6 207	0.8	6.9
<b>Prices</b>						
Consumer price index	June qtr 93	1989-90 = 100.0	109.3	n.a.	0.4	1.9
Articles produced by manufacturing industry	July 93	1988-89 = 100.0	115.5	n.a.	0.2	2.0
Materials used in manufacturing industries	July 93	1984-85 = 100.0	127.2	n.a.	0.0	0.8
<b>Labour force and demography</b>						
Employed persons	August 93	'000	7 684.9	7 729.6	-0.1	0.1
Participation rate †	"	%	62.0	62.6	0.2	-0.6
Unemployment rate †	"	%	10.7	11.1	0.4	0.2
Job vacancies	August qtr 93	'000	39.0	37.3	18.0	38.9
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.15	1.19	-0.5	8.3
Estimated resident population	Dec. qtr 92	million	17.6	n.a.	0.2	1.1
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	July 93	'000	247	244	-1.6	11.7
<b>Incomes</b>						
Company profits before income tax	June qtr 93	\$m	3 978	4 435	-1.8	33.6
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults; ordinary time	May qtr 93	\$	597.80	n.a.	0.7	1.8
<b>Financial markets</b>						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	August 93	% per annum	4.75	n.a.	-0.20	-1.15
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	6.65	n.a.	-0.25	-2.30
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	"	per SA	0.6785	n.a.	—	—

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia.  
 NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Key State indicators	Period	Percentage change from same period previous year								
		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	Mar. qtr 93	6.6	2.7	-14.0	2.2	31.5	1.0	n.a.	n.a.	3.2
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	August 93	-1.8	5.5	2.5	4.2	11.3	-0.7	n.a.	n.a.	2.9
New motor vehicle registrations†	August 93	13.8	5.0	18.0	9.6	21.9	34.3	-1.9	54.0	13.8
Number of dwelling unit approvals†	"	1.7	-0.2	8.1	18.9	21.6	6.0	92.0	-3.4	7.7
Value of total building work done	Mar. qtr 93	3.2	2.0	16.0	0.8	35.9	-0.5	-10.8	-6.2	7.5
Employed persons*	August 93	-1.0	-1.1	1.2	1.1	3.7	-2.0	-1.9	4.9	0.1
Capital city consumer price index	June qtr 93	1.8	1.8	2.5	2.7	1.1	2.2	1.5	2.2	1.9
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	May qtr 93	0.1	2.2	5.0	1.7	-0.1	2.0	2.5	4.2	1.8
Population	Dec. qtr 92	0.9	0.5	2.5	0.5	1.2	0.5	1.0	1.5	1.1
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	June qtr 93	4.6	3.6	12.2	-0.6	8.3	6.0	13.3	-7.1	6.4

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas, NT and ACT.  
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